

Brooklyn Free Space

ADMISSIONS FAQ's

Can I visit or tour the school?

All interested families are invited to attend our in-person open house on November 9, 2022, or attend a virtual tour during the scheduled dates in November through January. Tour dates are available on our website, and interested families may email admissions@brooklynfreespace.org to sign up for a tour.

Do I have to be part of the cooperative to have my child attend BFS?

All families are strongly encouraged to be part of the BFS cooperative, as it is a valuable part of our preschool experience. There are a very limited number of buy-outs available. While Pre-K families are not obligated to participate in the Cooperative, they are a vital part of our community and are also encouraged to participate.

How much of a time commitment is the cooperative responsibility?

Co-op members are required to attend the four General Meetings, each around 2 hours long. Each family is also required to fulfill a work commitment, which can be a regular job, committee work, or event volunteers. Time commitment is generally 2- 3 hours per month.

How do I apply?

Fill out our online application and pay the application fee (fee waived for pre-k applicants and returning/alumni families). A link for the application can be found on our Admissions page. All applications received by **January 17th, 2023** will be included in our admission's lottery.

How do I get put on the waitlist?

The waitlist is created during the lottery process held in the last week of January 2023. You cannot be put on the waitlist before the lottery is held. If you submit an application after the lottery, you will be put at the end of the waitlist. The waitlist of one year does not carry over to another year. You have to reapply for each school year.

How do I know if my child qualifies to be part of the Pre-K program?

For the 2023 - 2024 school year, all children born in 2019 are eligible for Pre-K for All placement and free tuition. Current families whose child is eligible for Pre-K, will be taken through the Pre-K for All process. Outside families must submit a BFS application and separately apply for Pre-K for All through the DOE (Applications usually open in late Winter). Pre-K for all spots are filled by the DOE, and BFS does not control spot placement. Families who apply with the DOE will be notified by them directly if they receive a spot at BFS (See Pre-K FAQs).

Do we have to attend an Open House or Tour to apply to the school? You are not required to attend the open house or tour to submit an application and be considered for the lottery. However, we strongly recommend that you do both in order to have a full sense of our school and community.

How do I know if I qualify for financial aid?

While BFS encourages applications for tuition reduction from all families that feel they need assistance, tuition reduction is typically offered to families whose annual household income is below \$75,000. If your family is interested in applying, you are welcome to indicate this on your BFS application. We utilize the online financial aid services at National Association of Independent School's School and Student Service (SSS). You can fill out their online application even before you are accepted to BFS, using our school code (found at the bottom of our website's admission page). Filling out the application does not guarantee a financial aid award.

What are the classroom ages and student-to-teacher-ratios?

To be eligible to attend BFS in the 2023-2024 school year, the youngest must be 2 years 4 months by September 30, meaning their 2nd birthday must be before June 1, 2021. The oldest must be 4 years 8 months by September 30, meaning their 4th birthday must be in 2021.

Approximately, by Classroom (classroom age ranges may shift, depending on the applicant pool):

- Jitterbug: 2 years 4 months - 2 years 11 months (*approximately*). 12 students to 3 teachers
- Dragonfly: 3 years - 3 years, 6 months (*approximately*). 15 children to 3 teachers
- Sunshine: 3 years, 6 months - 4 years, (*approximately*). 17 students to 3 teachers
- Rainbow: 4 years, 1 month to 4 years, 8 months (*approximately*). 18 students to 3 teachers

What are the hours and are there extended day and/or half-day options?

Hours for our Jitterbug and Dragonfly classrooms run from 9 am - 3 pm. Hours for our Sunshine and Rainbow classroom run 8:50 am - 3:10 pm. There are extended day options in the morning starting at 8am, and after school ending at 6pm. Currently we are not offering half day options at this time.

Does my child have to be toilet trained?

At BFS, we accept all children without regard to their toileting readiness. We understand that all children will reach their independence in toileting when they are physically, socially and emotionally ready. It is our policy to encourage and support each child individually as they become ready, and we do so together with the child's family as a team, using the same techniques, language and positive reinforcements.

Do the children nap? Children staying at school until 3 pm have a rest period after lunch. Children are not required to sleep, only to rest on their cot. Please note that we will not keep a child awake if they desire to sleep.

How do you handle nut or other food allergies?

BFS is nut-free on a year-to-year basis, depending on the needs of our enrolled children. If BFS is to be nut-free for the upcoming school year, all families will be informed before the start of school and will be given detailed instructions. Other food allergies are handled on a case-by-case basis to best meet the needs of your child.

Does BFS accommodate children with special needs?

BFS works in partnership with the special education teachers and therapists from outside agencies that support children with Individualized Education Programs (IEP's) to ensure that they are comfortable and productive in our learning environment.

Does BFS run a program during the summer?

BFS Summer Camp runs for 8 weeks, during July and August, and is open to all children who are returning, newly enrolled (3 years, 2 months & older), and alumni up to age 5. Summer Camp is a full-day, five day a week program, with operational and extended care hours the same as our school year program.

Does BFS provide lunch and snacks?

BFS children bring their own lunch and beverage daily in a lunchbox or lunch bag. BFS provides healthy snacks and asks that each child also bring a filled water bottle to school daily for use during snack time.

How do teachers communicate with families about their child's day?

At BFS, we strive to work in partnership with families to support children's preschool experience. Parents are welcomed into the classrooms daily and teachers communicate with parents in a variety of ways - by phone, via email or in person "check ins". On a regular basis, parents are emailed photos, newsletters and classroom updates. Each classroom also hosts Community Classroom forums and parent teacher conferences twice a year.

How often are the children outside?

We recognize that children thrive in natural environments and are committed to bring children outdoors, whenever possible, to Prospect Park, gardens and outside spaces every day. We have rainy weather gear for inclement weather and have opened up the outside gated area in front of the school for play and exploration.

Weather permitting, the children take a daily short group walk to JJ Byrne Park's playground at 5th Avenue (between 3rd and 4th Streets) for supervised outdoor play. Children also take group walks to explore nature, sights and sounds around the area. All classrooms spend time year-round tending our seasonal plants in classroom garden beds in front of the school.

What is BFS' approach to discipline?

At Brooklyn Free Space, we meet discipline challenges head on. We feel that children learn to build self-control when they can see the possible consequences of their actions, when they are offered alternative behaviors, and when they actively participate in problem solving, negotiation and conflict resolution. There are no "time outs". Through mutual respect, acceptance, encouragement, kindness, firmness and admiration, they learn to balance their needs with those of other people, while becoming increasingly independent in building self-control.